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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R5–FHC–2015–N092]

[FF05F24400–FXFR13350500000]

Information Collection Request Sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Approval; Horseshoe Crab Tagging Program

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) have sent an Information Collection Request (ICR) to OMB for review and approval. We summarize the ICR below and describe the nature of the collection and the estimated burden and cost. This information collection is scheduled to expire on May 31, 2015. We may not conduct or sponsor and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. However, under OMB regulations, we may continue to conduct or sponsor this information collection while it is pending at OMB.

DATES: You must submit comments on or before **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: Send your comments and suggestions on this information collection to the Desk Officer for the Department of the Interior at OMB–OIRA at (202) 395–

5806 (fax) or OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov (email). Please provide a copy of your comments to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803 (mail), or hope_grey@fws.gov (email). Please include "1018-0127" in the subject line of your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request additional information about this ICR, contact Hope Grey at hope_grey@fws.gov (email) or 703-358-2482 (telephone). You may review the ICR online at <http://www.reginfo.gov>. Follow the instructions to review Department of the Interior collections under review by OMB.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Information Collection Request

OMB Control Number: 1018-0127.

Title: Horseshoe Crab Tagging Program.

Service Form Number(s): 3-2310 and 3-2311.

Type of Request: Extension of currently approved collection.

Description of Respondents: Tagging agencies include Federal and State agencies, universities, and biomedical companies. Members of the general public provide recapture information.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Frequency of Collection: On occasion when horseshoe crabs are tagged and when horseshoe crabs are found or captured.

Activity	Number of annual respondents	Number of annual responses	Completion time per response	Annual burden hours
FWS Form 3-2310	1,160	2,750	10 minutes	458
FWS Form 3-2311	18	18	95 hours*	1,710

Totals	1,178	2,768		2,168
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*Average time required per response is dependent on the number of tags applied by an agency in 1 year. Agencies tag between 25 and 9,000 horseshoe crabs annually, taking between 2 to 5 minutes per crab to tag, record, and report data. Each agency determines the number of tags it will apply.

Estimated Annual Nonhour Burden Cost: None.

Abstract: Horseshoe crabs play a vital role commercially, biomedically, and ecologically along the Atlantic coast. Horseshoe crabs are commercially harvested and used as bait in eel and conch fisheries. Biomedical companies along the coast also collect and bleed horseshoe crabs at their facilities. Limulus Amoebocyte Lysate is derived from crab blood, which has no synthetic substitute, and is used by pharmaceutical companies to test sterility of products. Finally, migratory shorebirds also depend on the eggs of horseshoe crabs to refuel on their migrations from South America to the Arctic. One bird in particular, the red knot, feeds primarily on horseshoe crab eggs during its stopover. Effective January 12, 2015, the red knot was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

In 1998, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), a management organization with representatives from each State on the Atlantic Coast, developed a horseshoe crab management plan. The ASMFC plan and its subsequent addenda established mandatory State-by-State harvest quotas, and created the 1,500-square-mile Carl N. Shuster, Jr., Horseshoe Crab Sanctuary off the mouth of Delaware Bay.

Restrictive measures have been taken in recent years, but populations are increasing slowly. Because horseshoe crabs do not breed until they are 9 years or

older, it may take some time before the population measurably increases. Federal and State agencies, universities, and biomedical companies participate in a Horseshoe Crab Cooperative Tagging Program. The Maryland Fishery Resources Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, maintains the information that we collect under this program and uses it to evaluate migratory patterns, survival, and abundance of horseshoe crabs.

Agencies that tag and release the crabs complete FWS Form 3–2311 (Horseshoe Crab Tagging) and provide the Service with:

- Organization name.
- Contact person name.
- Tag number.
- Sex of crab.
- Prosomal width.
- Capture site, latitude, longitude, waterbody, State, and date.

Members of the public who recover tagged crabs provide the following information using the online submission form (<http://www.fws.gov/crabtag/>) or via a toll-free telephone number:

- Tag number.
- Whether or not tag was removed.
- Condition of crab.
- Date captured/found.
- Crab fate.
- Finder type.

- Capture method.
- Capture location.
- Reporter information.
- Comments.

If the public participant who reports the tagged crab requests information, we send data pertaining to the tagging program and tag and release information on the horseshoe crab that was found or captured.

Comments Received and Our Responses

Comments: On February 10, 2015, we published in the *Federal Register* (80 FR 7490) a notice of our intent to request that OMB renew approval for this information collection. In that notice, we solicited comments for 60 days, ending on April 13, 2015. We did not receive any comments.

Request for Public Comments

We again invite comments concerning this information collection on:

- Whether or not the collection of information is necessary, including whether or not the information will have practical utility;
- The accuracy of our estimate of the burden for this collection of information;
- Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask OMB in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that it will be done.

Dated: May 13, 2015

Tina A. Campbell,
Chief, Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
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